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This seems a matter worth remarking. A book written in such a style as this can be no great credit to American scholarship, however valuable the facts entombed in it. We ought to have something better. It may be futile to hope that all our students, or even our teachers, will write as well as James Russell Lowell, or even as well as George P. Marsh. But if they cannot be fascinating and delightful, they might at least, one would say, be dignified and keep within the bounds of good taste. If they cannot be of those few who really know how to write, they need not ally themselves to the many who do not care to know.

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*The Children's Treasury of English Song.* Selected and arranged with notes. By FRANCIS TURNER PALGRAVE. New York: Macmillan & Co., 1893. pp. viii+294.

This is an old and well known standard collection of lyrical poems "for children between nine or ten, and fifteen or sixteen years of age; the pleasure and advantage of the older students in elementary, and the younger in grammar and public schools, being especially kept in view." It has served for nearly twenty years, in the admirable Golden Treasury Series, the noble purpose of the editor, "to give pleasure,—high, pure, manly, and therefore lasting—to children in the stage between early childhood and early youth." Its appearance in cheaper form in Macmillan's School Library of books suitable for supplementary reading, a series of recognized excellence, assures for it a fresh popularity, and a still larger public of delighted children, if indeed the children of our public schools are to any extent allowed access to the honeyed fountains of the gardens and dells of the Muses, whither Socrates told Ion the lyric poets, like the bees, wing their way.

To criticise the selections of the editor of the famous "Golden Treasury of the Best Songs and Lyrical Poems of the English Language," and of the dainty editions of Keats and Herrick in the same series, would be mere pedantry; to praise them is entirely superfluous. Himself a poet, and an Oxford professor of poetry, Mr. Palgrave has been obliged like Ion, to refer to that charming dialogue once more, "to be continually in the company of many good poets, a thing greatly to be envied." A good editor, like a good rhapsode in the days when that terrible creature, the scientific educator, was unknown, ought to understand his poet and interpret him to the reader. This Mr. Palgrave does, always briefly, never injudiciously.

Suitability to childhood, high rank in poetical merit, poetry for poetry's sake, these are the principles of selection. One might

object to "The Ancient Mariner" on certain grounds if it were not for Lowell's confession: "I cannot think it a personal peculiarity, but a matter of universal experience, that more bits of Coleridge have imbedded themselves in my memory than of any other poet. This argues perfectness of expression." And if one should venture to say, but not perfectness of understanding, no doubt a proper answer might be, that the "delightfully fortuitous inconsequence" of the wonderful poem is a characteristic of childhood itself, and what does it matter. Or if one should object to Milton's great "Hymn" as unfit, according to the editor's standard, because it contains "artificial or highly allusive language" he might justly reply, that he was aware of it, and that he admits in the notes that it "moves somewhat heavily at times, and as if embarrassed by its weight of historical allusion," and that he explains these allusions. Of the selections we can truly say, as Mr. Palgrave says of Cowper's serenely simple lines on the "Loss of the Royal George": "Readers who admire them are on the right way to a high and lasting pleasure." And for a child to be on the right way to a high and lasting pleasure, to be continually in the company of many good poets, is indeed a thing to be as greatly envied now as it was in the days of Ion. Or if one wants the mere pedagogical view he may have it from Dr. Laurie: "The poets of England have been generous in their gifts to children." \* \* \* "The modern educationalist is apt to slight the learning of passages by heart."

We have for some years been gradually coming to a recognition of the real worth of literature, of good poetry especially, in the education of the young. This is due largely to the influence of Matthew Arnold. In his general report for the year 1871 he wrote: "Literature is in itself the greatest power available in education; of this power it is not too much to say that in our elementary schools at present no use is made at all." He attached great value to learning good poetry *by rote*, and protested against treating it as an unintelligent exercise, and a waste of time. The practice increased in his district because the teachers knew that he was strongly in favor of it; and in 1880 he wrote, that of the specific subjects this was by far the most popular. He assigned great formative power and refining influence to literary culture. "The acquisition of good poetry is a discipline which works deeper than any other discipline in the range of work of our schools," may seem an exaggerated estimate of the value of poetry in education, to be regarded with suspicion and displeasure by some people, as it was so regarded where his reports were made. But Dr. Laurie emphasizes the value of good literature hardly less than Mr. Arnold. He finds in its rich stores the means of establishing "that sympathetic bond which is the source of all true power over the human mind, because it is spiritual

power." Or as Mr. Arnold puts it: "It inspires the emotion so helpful in making principles operative." But the secondary teacher who loves literature, and believes with Dr. Schurman in its pre-eminence as educative material, needs to be reminded of the candid admission of Mr. Arnold that its refining influence "seems to need in the recipient a certain refinement of nature at the outset in order to make itself felt." Perhaps what we all need to be reminded of over and over again is the vanity of the dreams of enthusiasts that we can make men after a certain pattern by any process, literary or scientific. The abiding worth of good poetry is that it operates independently of us, and in spite of methods.

Nor is this high estimate modern and purely personal. It has the confirmation of a brilliant national experience. For Dr. Curtius tells us in his *History of Greece* that "when the boy had learned to read and write, he read the poets; he learnt to declaim them, and with the words appropriated to himself the wealth of their subject-matter. Reason and feeling, taste and judgment, were developed by his habituating himself more and more to the ideas of poets of high and universal reputation." Was this the meat on which the Greek mind fed that it grew so great as to be the *originating* mind of Europe. For it is to the Attic fields that we must still repair if we would brush the early dew of thought in all its freshness.

We confess that we stand in awe of the modern psychologist with his constant observation of children's minds, his ceaseless introspection of his own, perpetually parading his bantling, the *ego*, naked and not ashamed. We speak with bated breath in that august presence. But for ourselves whose mind, like Topsy, merely "grewed," who have been feeling around after the truth of educational theory and practice if haply we might find it, for us the true word, the master word, is not education, nor instruction, nor discipline, nor training, but *nutrition*. Neither is that new. *Haec studia adolescentiam alunt*. Reason and feeling, taste and judgment, is that so poor an ideal after all? And the beauty of it is that literature, especially good poetry, makes for such an ideal powerfully and unconsciously. The process goes on in the mind of the child as the process of healthy nutrition goes on, he knoweth not how.

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